

EMPIRe



ZONE

X-FACTOR

#233

MARVEL



DAVID
KIRK
MILLA



Founded by Jamie Madrox and staffed by a group of the best mutant heroes around, when superhumanity needs a detective agency, they call on X-Factor Investigations.

X-FACTOR

MULTIPLE MAN



JAMIE MADROX
Self-Duplication

BUTTERFLY



LAYLA MILLER
Resurrection

SHATTERSTAR



GAVEEDRA SEVEN
Teleportation

RICTOR



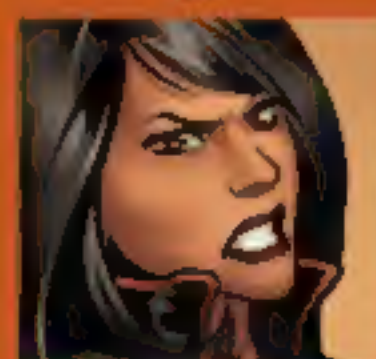
JULIO RICHTER
Seismic Control

STRONG GUY



GUIDO CAROSELLA
Strong Guy

M



MONET ST. CROIX
Telepathy, Flight, Super-Strength, Invulnerability, Telekinesis

BANSHEE



THERESA COSSIDY
Sonic Scream, Suggestion

WOLFSBANE



RAHNE SINCLAIR
Werewolf

LONGSHOT



Luck

PIP THE TROLL



PIP GOFERN
Troll

HAVOK



ALEX SUMMERS
Cosmic Energy Blasts

POLARIS



LORNA DANE
Magnetic Control

PREVIOUSLY

With the aid of a dead Doctor Strange, a dimension-hopping Madrox was propelled back to his own world and into the waiting arms of Layla Miller. Little does he know that things have changed in terms of X-Factor leadership, because he didn't read X-Factor #230. Why? 'Cause he was in an alternate world. If you missed it, what's your excuse?

MEANWHILE: While watching the Giants win the Super Bowl [Yea!] Peter saw Madonna [who made guys go gaga before Gaga] sing "Vogue" and suddenly wondered how many younger viewers had no idea who Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, and Bette Davis--all named in the song--were. If you are among those, please do the following: Crack Google, IMDB, or even [gasp!] a library, then go rent some videos. Watching black and white films will not cause your eyes to bleed. Don't wind up like those people on Twitter after the Grammys asking, "Who's Paul McCartney?" You--and the greats upon whose shoulders modern films and music stand--deserve better.

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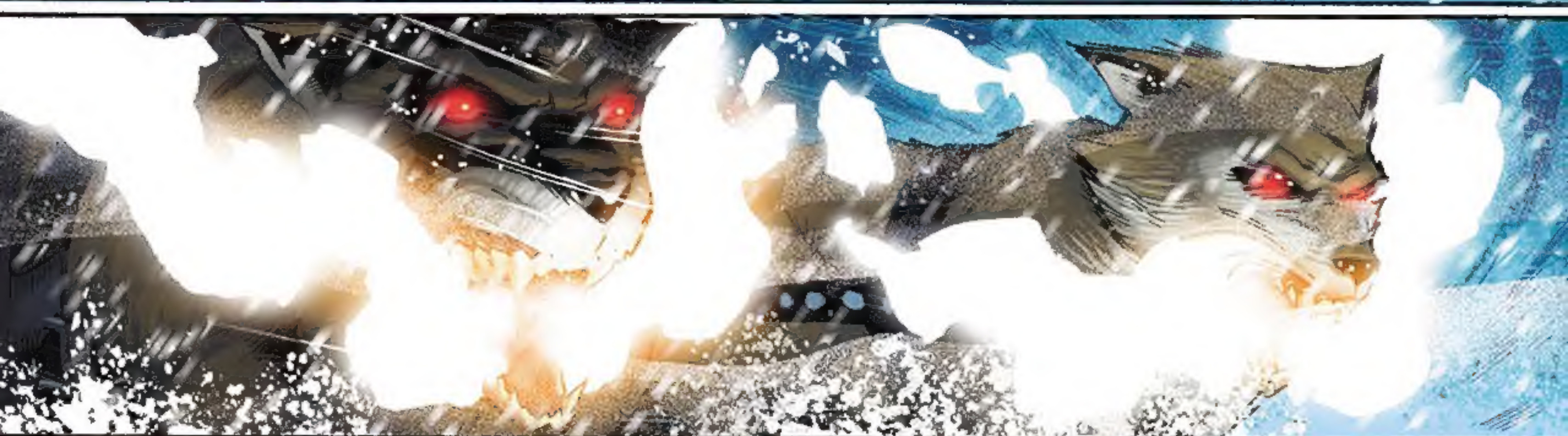
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X-FACTOR (ISSN #1932-5266) No. 233, May 2012. Published Monthly by MARVEL WORLDWIDE, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, LLC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. © 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. \$2.99 per copy in the U.S. (GST #R127032852) in the direct market and \$3.99 per copy in the U.S. and \$3.99 in Canada (GST #R127032852) through the newsstand; Canadian Agreement #40668537. Printed in the USA. Subscription rate (U.S. dollars) for 12 issues: U.S. \$27.00; Canada \$41.00; Foreign \$41.00. POSTMASTER: SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO X-FACTOR, C/O MARVEL SUBSCRIPTION DEPT. P.O. BOX 5187 BRENTWOOD, TN 37024. TELEPHONE # (800) 217-9158. FAX # (615) 377-0525. subscriptions@marvel.com. ALAN FINE, EVP - Office of the President, Marvel Worldwide, Inc. and EVP & CMO Marvel Characters B.V.; DAN BUCKLEY, Publisher & President - Print, Animation & Digital Divisions; JOE QUESADA, Chief Creative Officer; TOM BREVOORT, SVP of Publishing; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Operations & Procurement, Publishing; RUWAN JAYATILLEKE, SVP & Associate Publisher, Publishing; C.B. CEBULSKI, SVP of Creator & Content Development; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, SVP of Brand Planning & Communications; JIM O'KEEFE, VP of Operations & Logistics; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; ALEX MORALES, Publishing Operations Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact John Dokes, SVP of Integrated Sales & Marketing, at jdokes@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-9158. Manufactured between 02/24/2012 and 03/06/2012 by R.R. DONNELLEY, INC., GLASGOW, KY, USA.





AND
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?

I SEE,
JOSEF HUBER,
THAT YOU'RE THE
SHOOT FIRST, ASK
QUESTIONS
LATER TYPE.

IT
TENDS TO SAVE
TIME.

WHAT
ARE YOU?



I NOTICE YOU SAID, "WHAT" AM I. DIDN'T YOU MEAN "WHO"?

NO. I CANNOT SENSE YOUR MIND, BUT NOT BECAUSE OF YOU BLOCKING IT. IT'S AS IF YOU WERE A BLACK HOLE; AS IF YOU'RE NOT TRULY HERE.



IF YOU WERE A "WHO," YOUR VERY PRESENCE WOULD BE PAINFUL TO ME.

YOUR THOUGHTS WOULD BE HAMMERING AWAY AT ME.

I WOULD BE TRYING TO KILL YOU.



AND FAILING, THANKS TO YOUR "MENTAL BLOCK" AGAINST KILLING MUTANTS.

SO YOU ADMIT YOU'RE A MUTANT.

ACTUALLY, FAR MORE DARINGLY UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES: I ADMIT I'M NOT.



AT LEAST NOT IN THE CLASSIC SENSE.

IN POINT OF FACT, JOSEF: I'M HERE TO HELP YOU.



AH.

WELL, THEN...WE SHOULD TALK.

WE SHOULD TALK.

I'M JUST NOT
EXACTLY SURE
WHAT TO SAY.

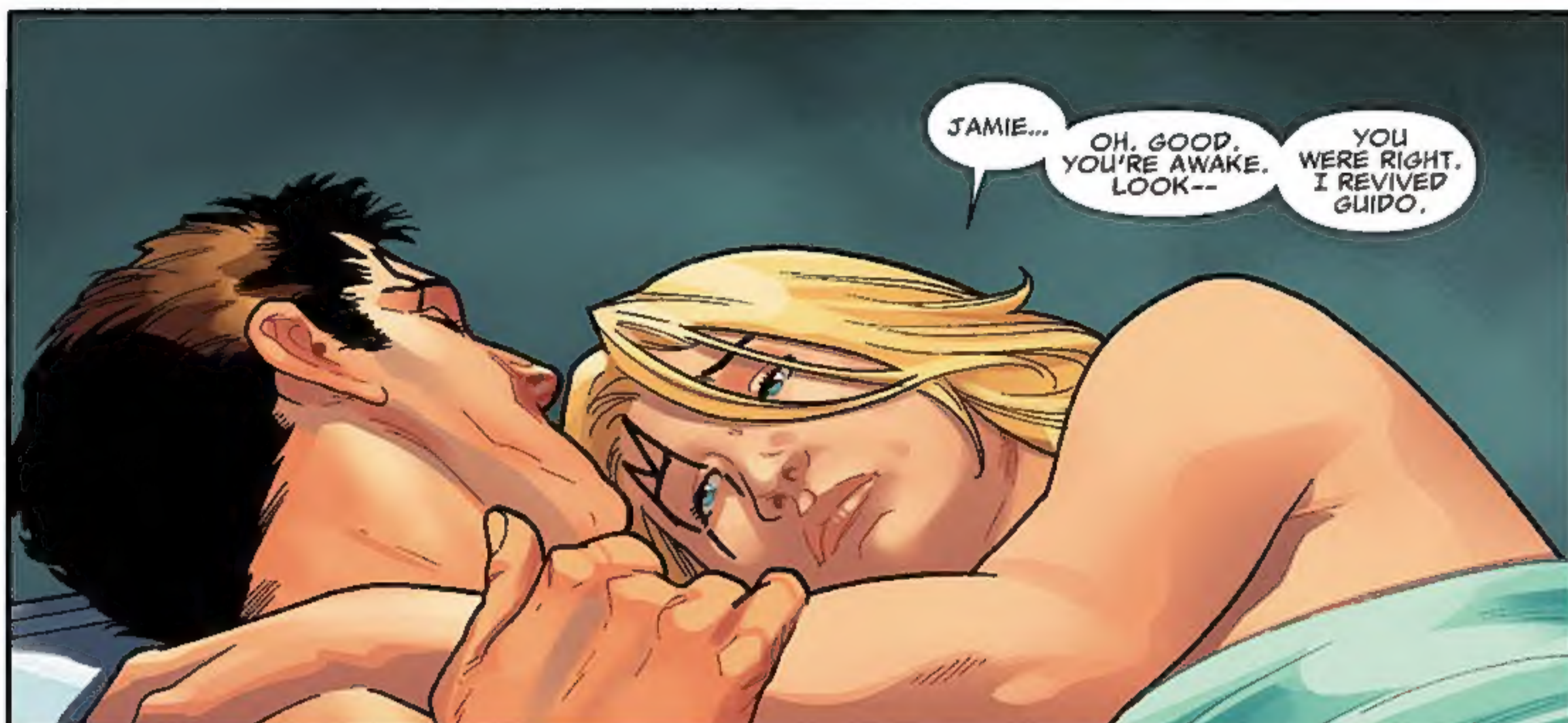
"SO...LAYLA...WE WERE
SO CAUGHT UP IN THE
MOMENT THAT WE DID
SOMETHING THAT
PROBABLY WASN'T WISE."

PLUS THERE'S THE WHOLE
THING ABOUT HOW I'M STILL
SKEEVED BECAUSE I'M
PRETTY SURE SHE BROUGHT
GUIDO BACK FROM THE DEAD.

THIS WAS A MISTAKE.
AS LONG AS SHE'S
HIDING THINGS FROM ME,
THIS ISN'T GOING TO
GO ANYWHERE GOOD.



IN FROM
THE COLD



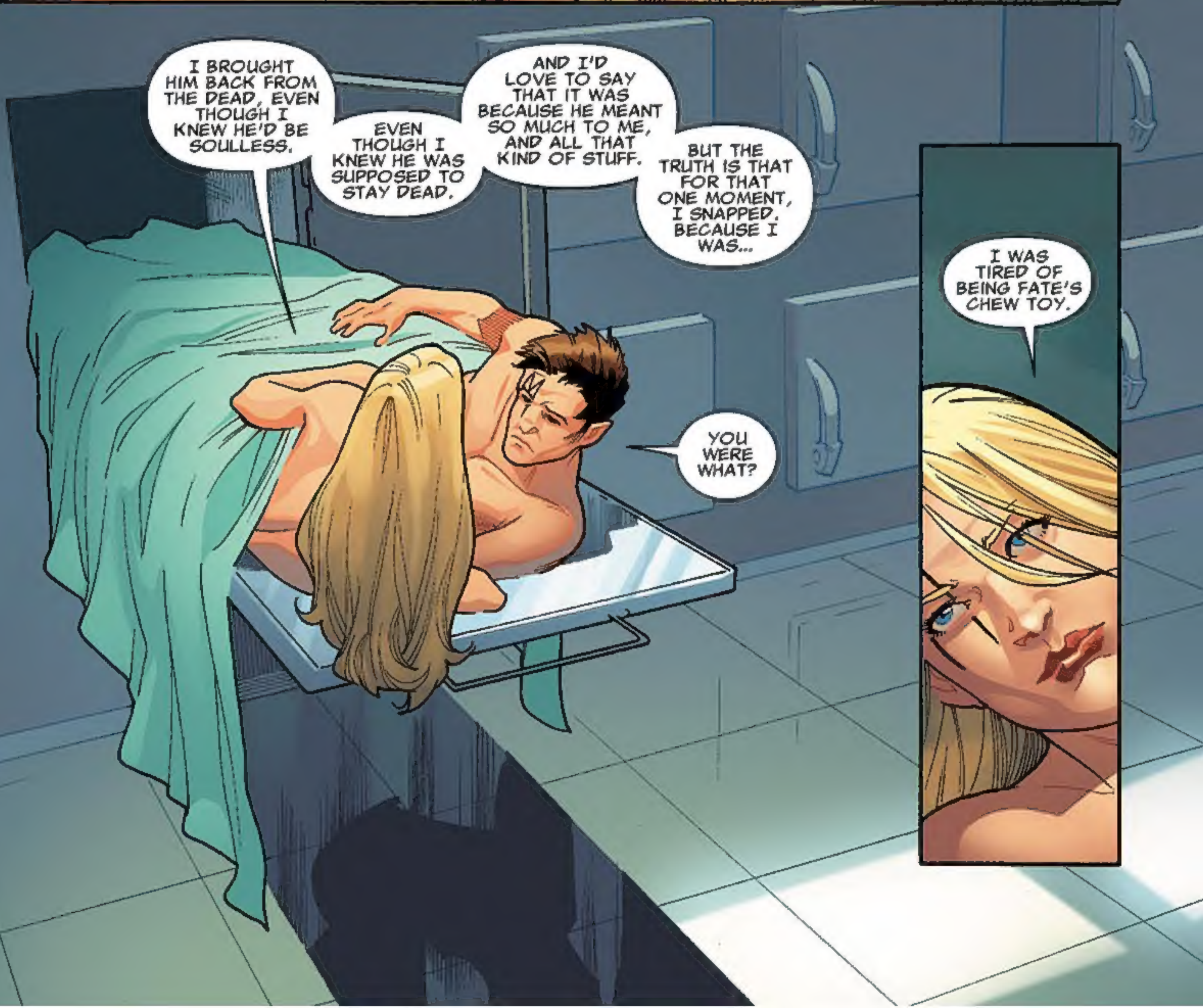
JAMIE...

OH, GOOD.
YOU'RE AWAKE.
LOOK--

YOU
WERE RIGHT.
I REVIVED
GUIDO.



HUH?



I BROUGHT
HIM BACK FROM
THE DEAD, EVEN
THOUGH I
KNEW HE'D BE
SOULLESS.

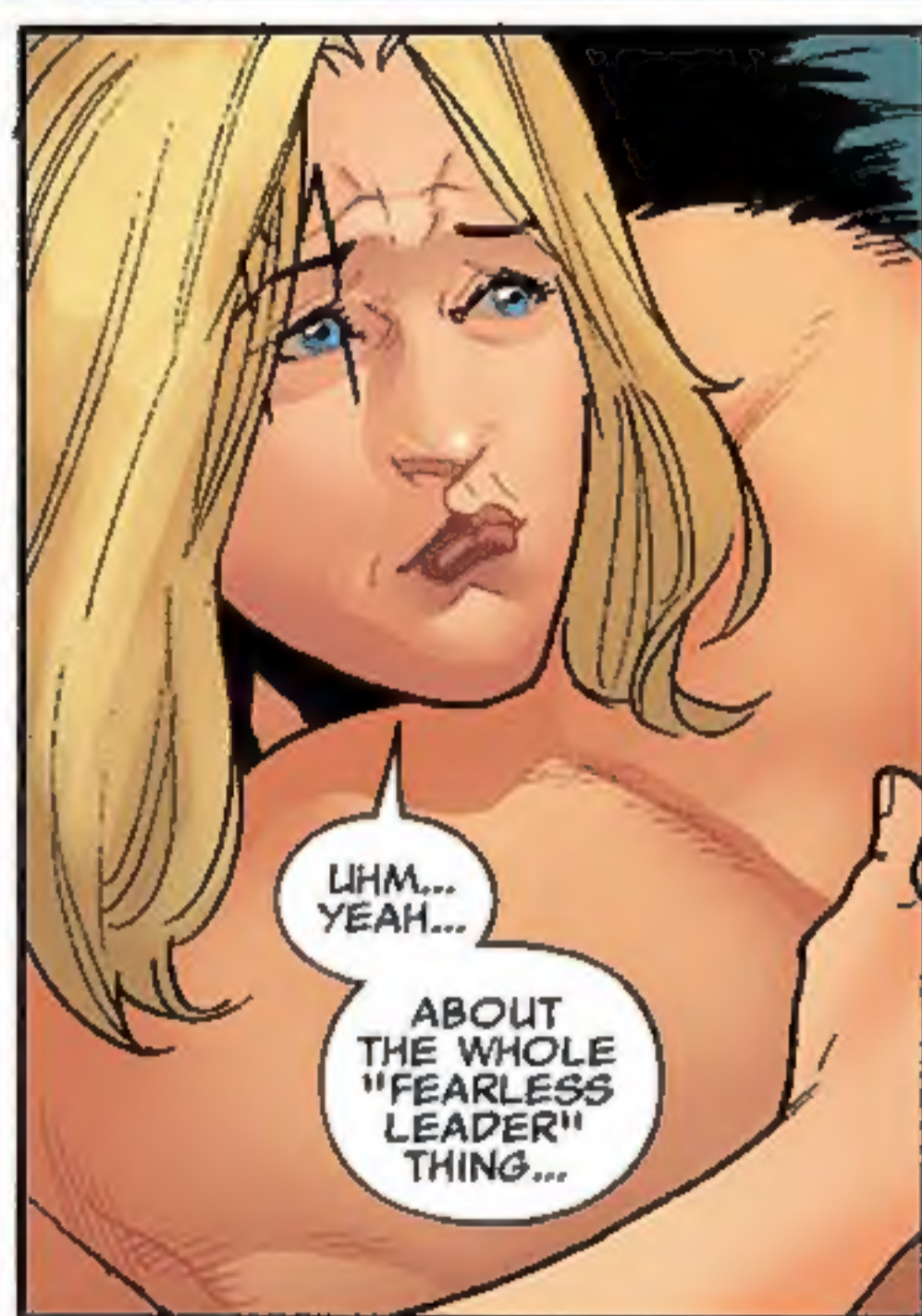
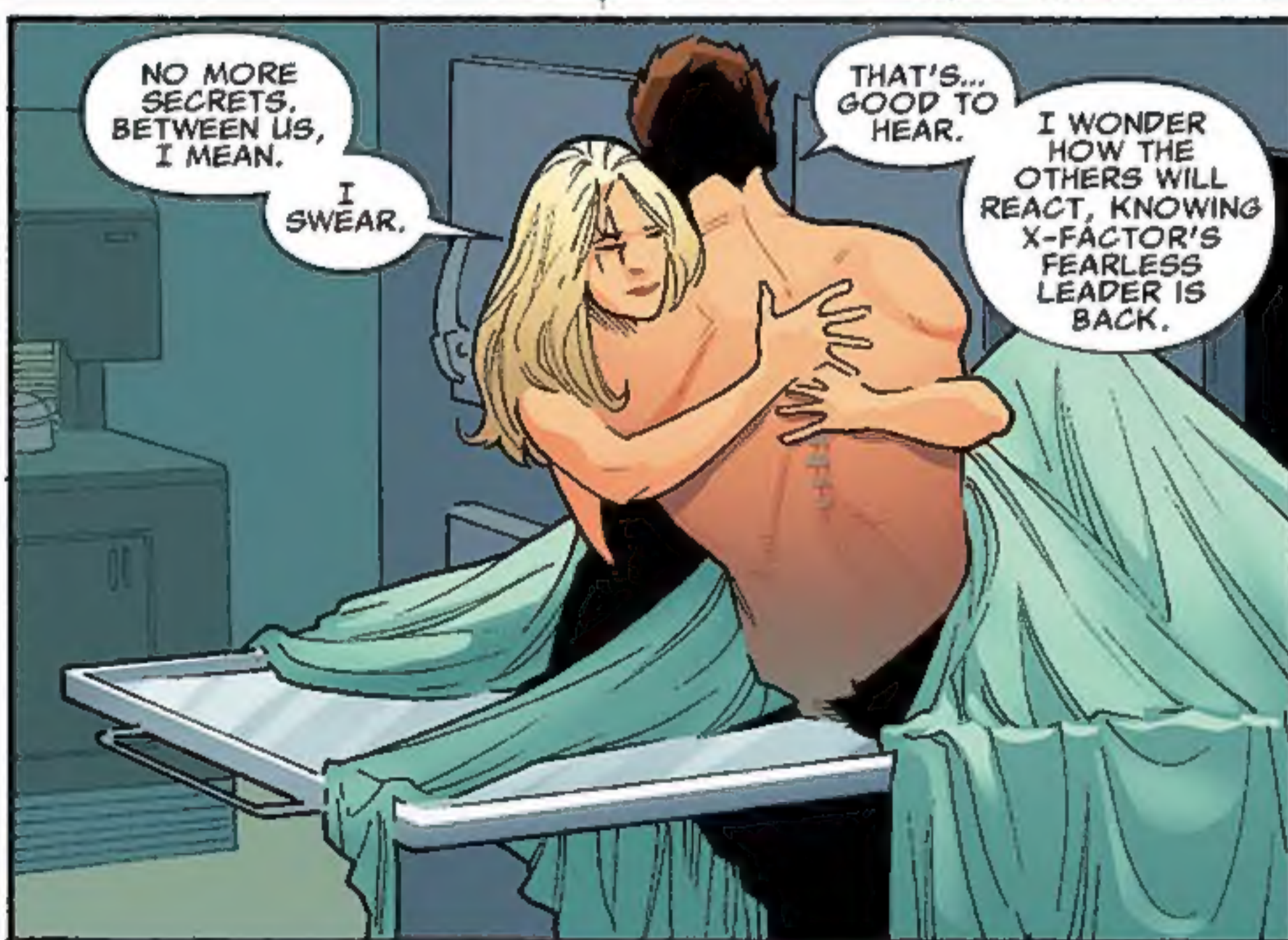
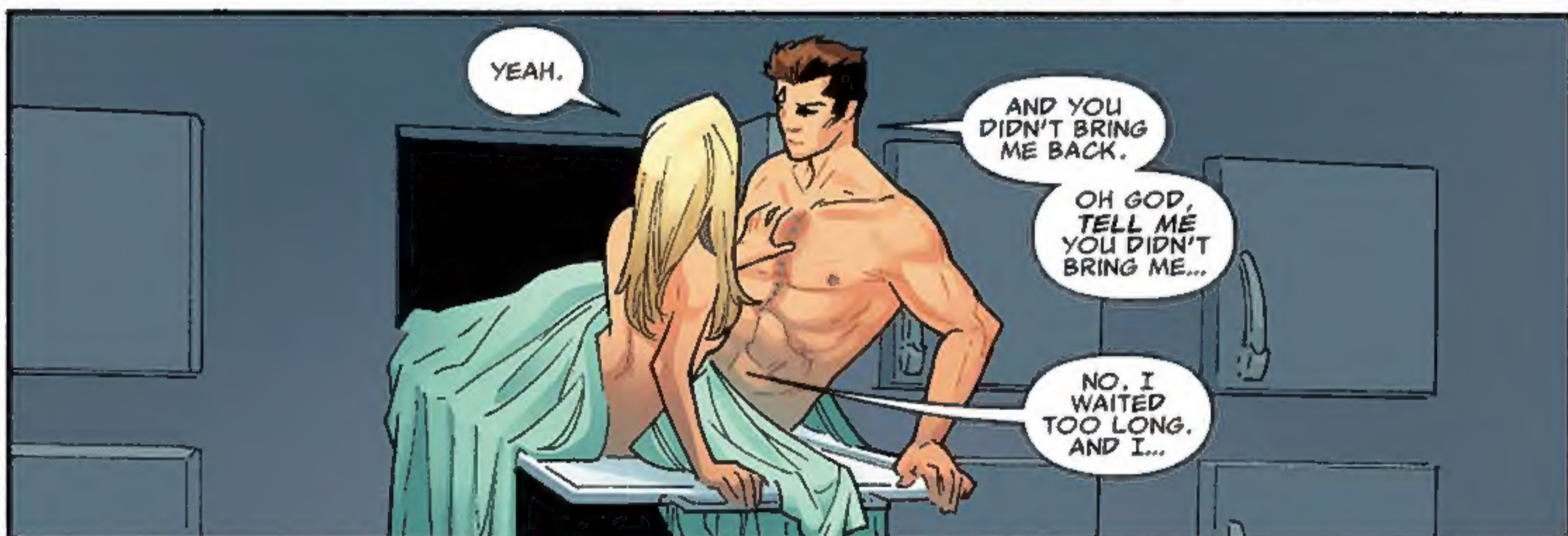
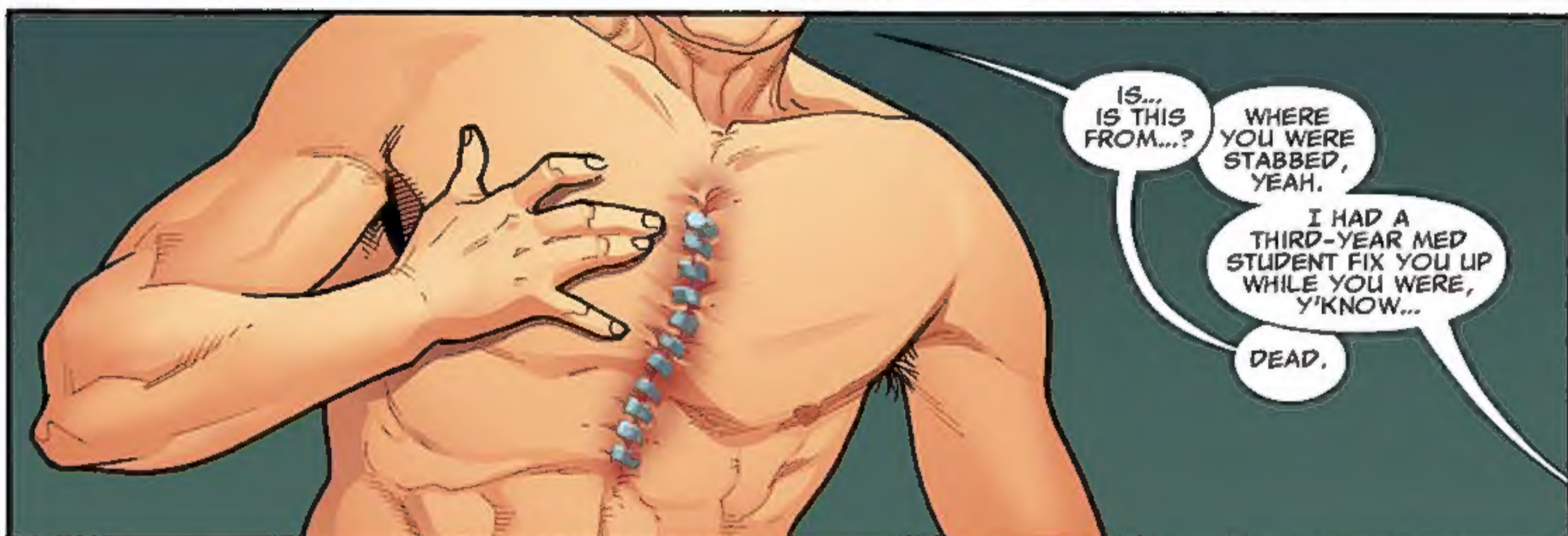
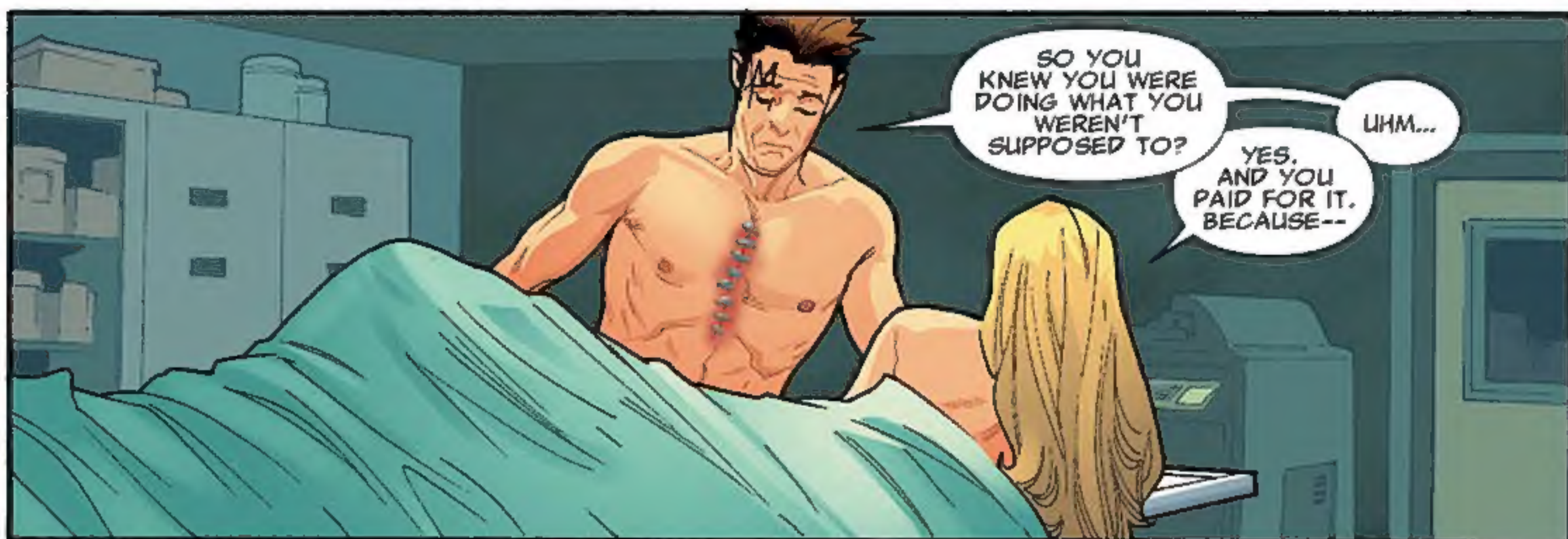
EVEN
THOUGH I
KNEW HE WAS
SUPPOSED TO
STAY DEAD.

AND I'D
LOVE TO SAY
THAT IT WAS
BECAUSE HE MEANT
SO MUCH TO ME,
AND ALL THAT
KIND OF STUFF.

BUT THE
TRUTH IS THAT
FOR THAT
ONE MOMENT,
I SNAPPED,
BECAUSE I
WAS...

YOU
WERE
WHAT?

I WAS
TIRED OF
BEING FATE'S
CHEW TOY.





"THERE'S, UH...
THERE'S BEEN
SOME CHANGES."



SO THERE'S
CHILDREN IN
THERE, HUH?

AT LEAST
A DOZEN,
MAYBE
MORE.

AND YET
IT WASN'T 'TIL
THEY STARTED
WRITING THREATENING
LETTERS TO THE
PRESIDENT THAT YA
DECIDED TO STEP
IN, HUH, VAL?

I MEAN,
YEAH, THEY HAVE
A WHOLE "TARGET
MUTANTS" AGENDA,
BUT YOU WERE
OKAY WITH
THAT...

YOU KNOW
WHAT, GUIDO?
HOW ABOUT WE
DON'T EVEN
GO THERE.



THEN WHY
DON'T WE
GO THERE?
SETTLE THIS
QUICKLY.

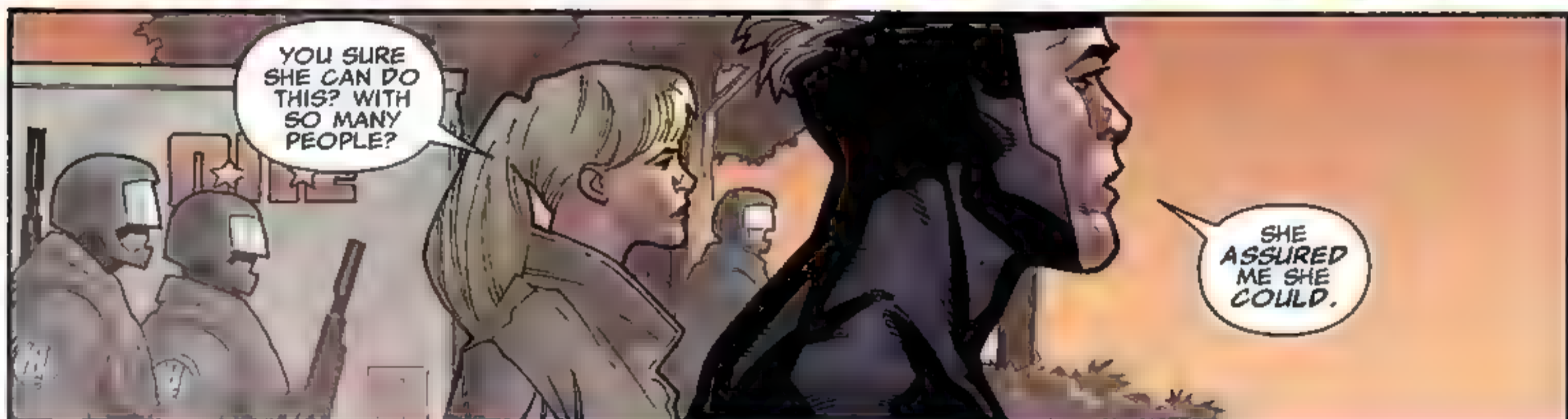
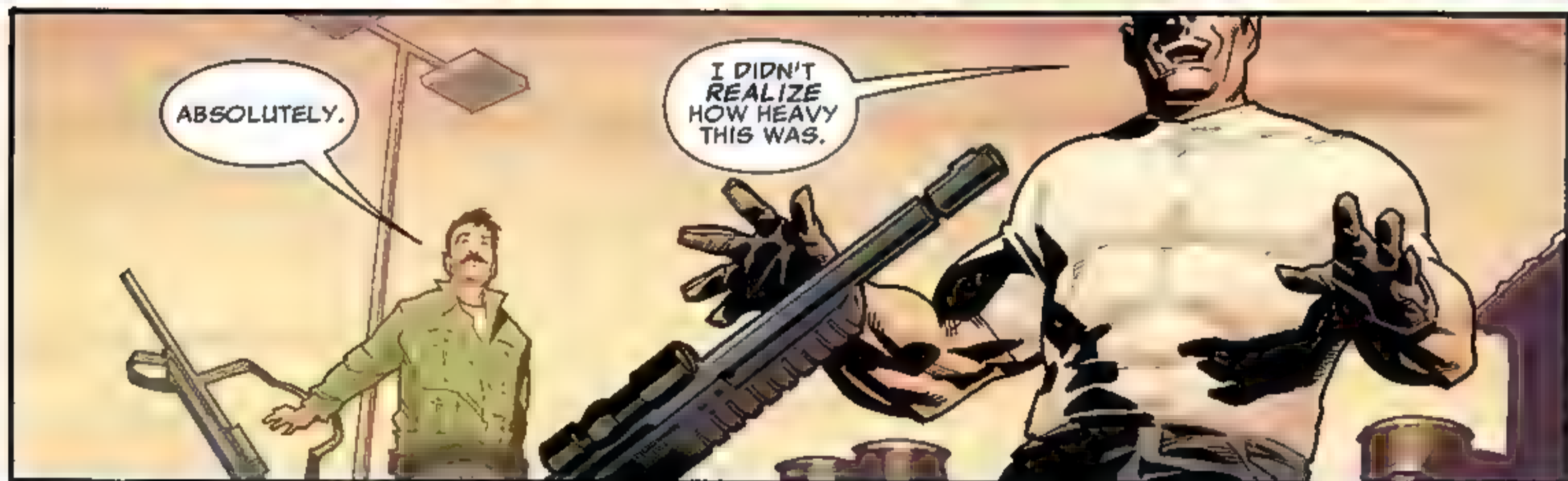
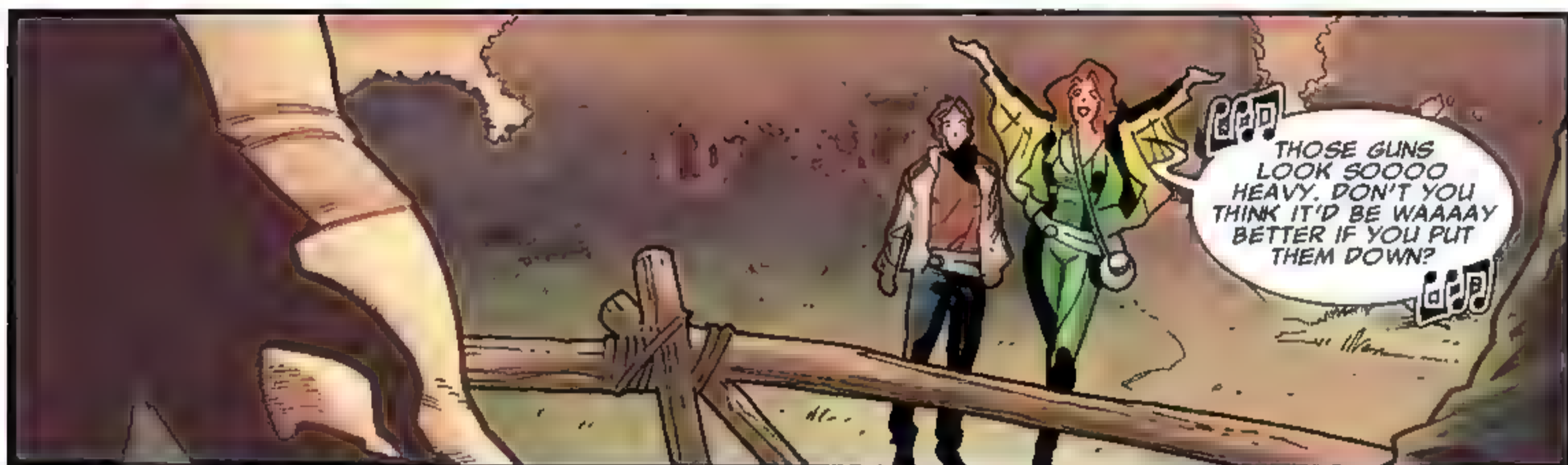
WHOA!
WATCH IT WITH
THOSE!

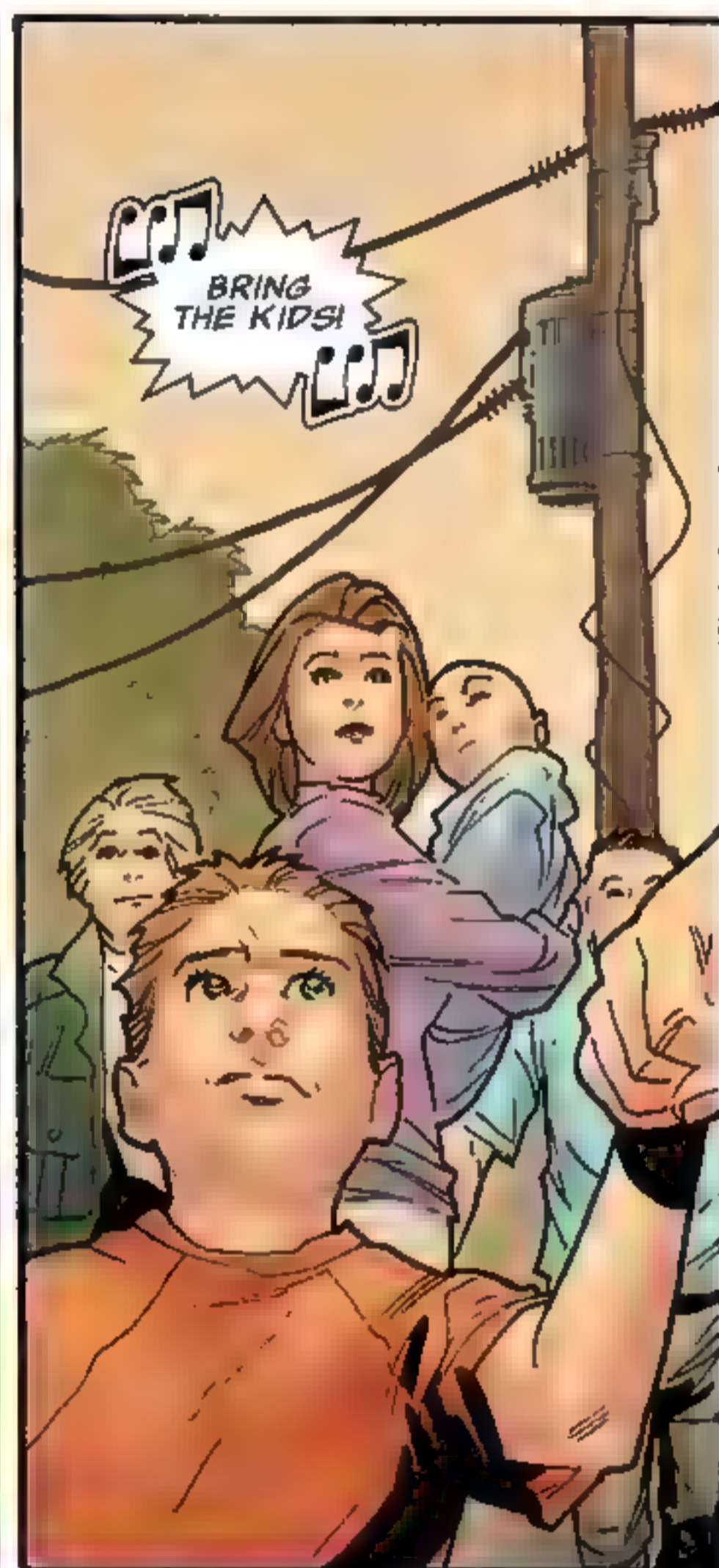
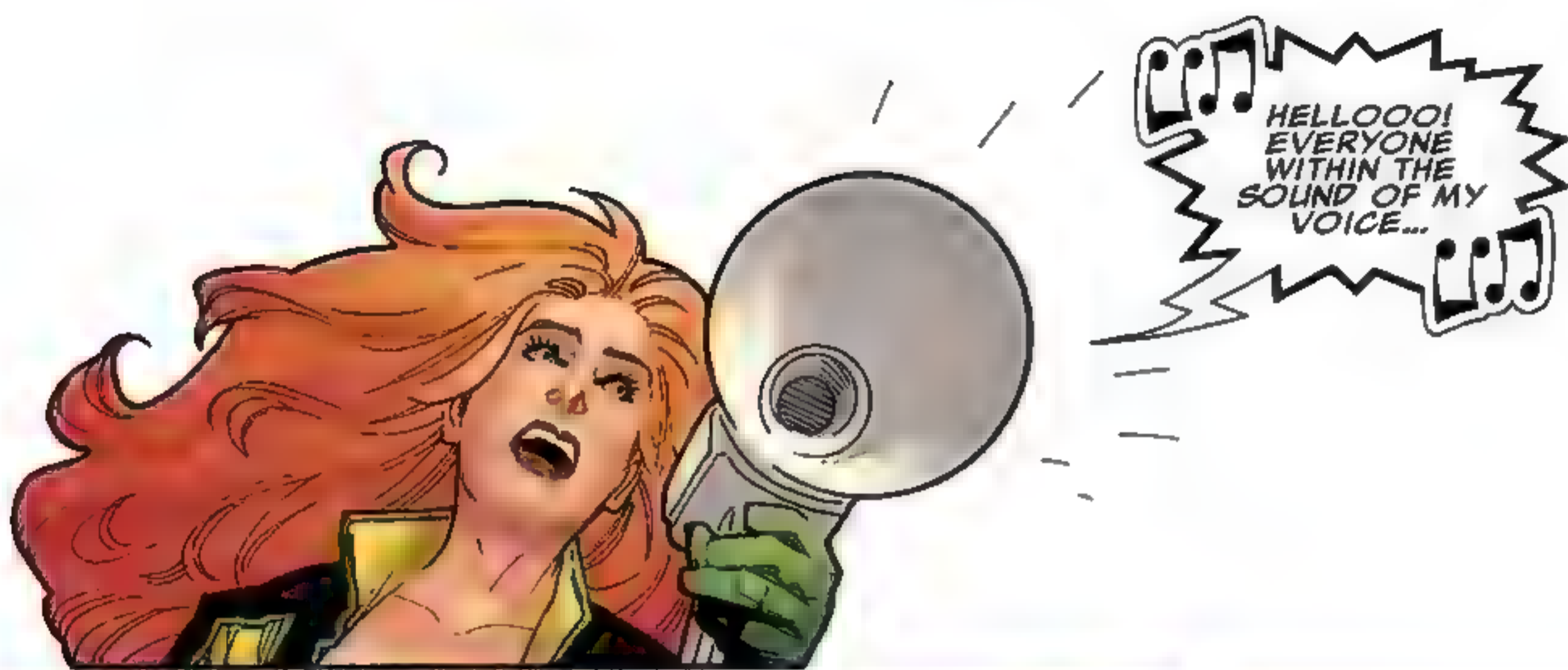


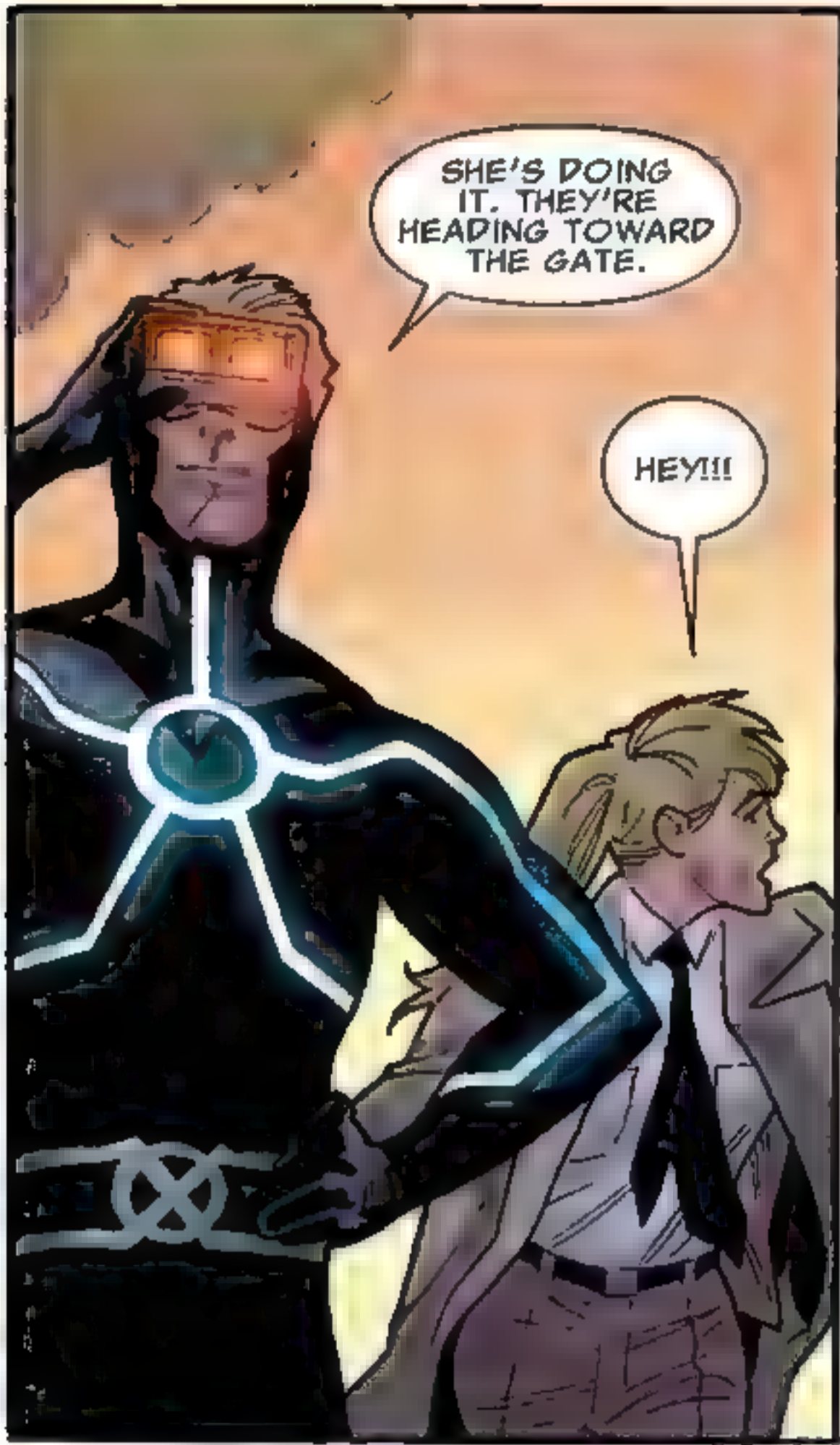
IF WE
CHARGE THE
PLACE...START
THROWING OUR
POWERS
AROUND...

THERE'S
NO WAY OF
GUARANTEEING
THE CHILDREN'S
SAFETY.

BESIDES...
THERE'S AN
EASIER
WAY.







SHE'S DOING IT. THEY'RE HEADING TOWARD THE GATE.

HEY!!!



WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE---?

OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE!



OOOPS. SORRY. SHOULD'VE SEEN THAT COMING.

I NOTICE TERRY'S VOICE ISN'T AFFECTING YOU, VAL.



SHE'S NOT MY TYPE.

HUH? WHAT...?

GET FOCUSED, SILVERSTONE.



UH-OH.

UH-OH? WHAT'S "UH-OH"? WHAT'S WRONG?

I'M NOT SURE.

"RICKTOR,
ARE YOU
READING ME?"

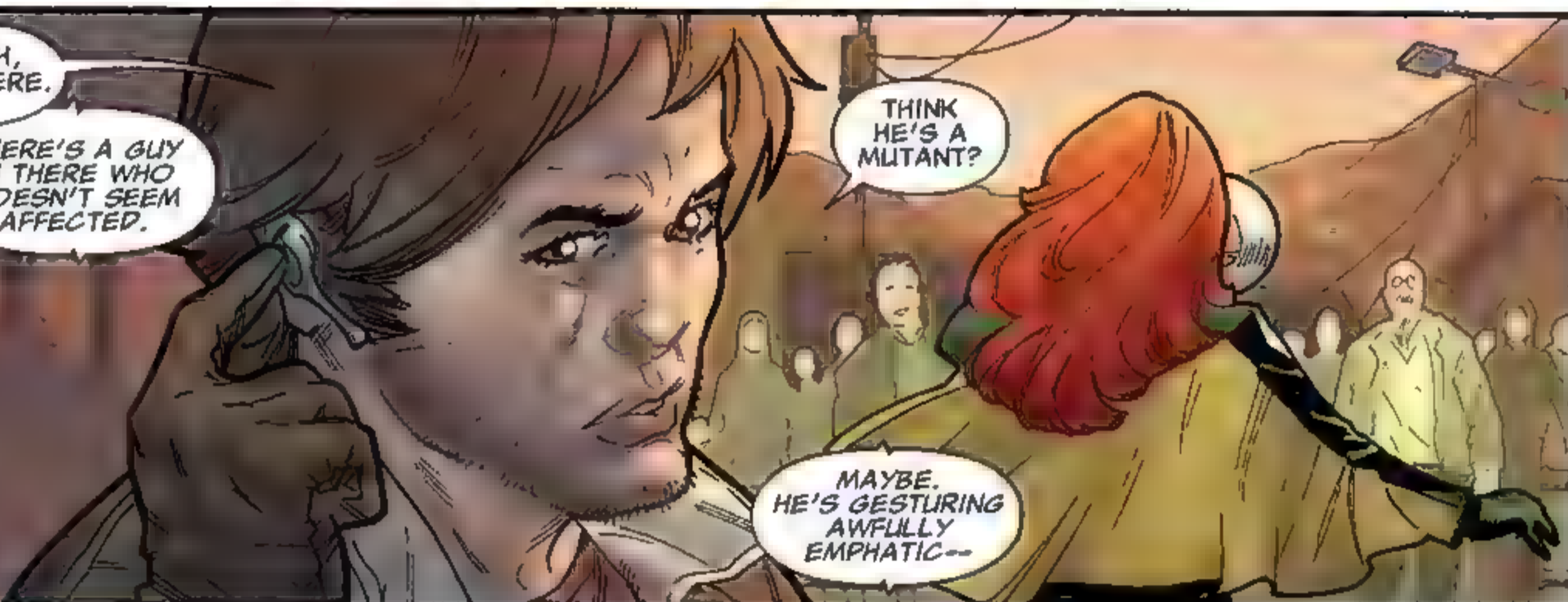


YEAH,
I'M HERE.

THERE'S A GUY
IN THERE WHO
DOESN'T SEEM
AFFECTED.

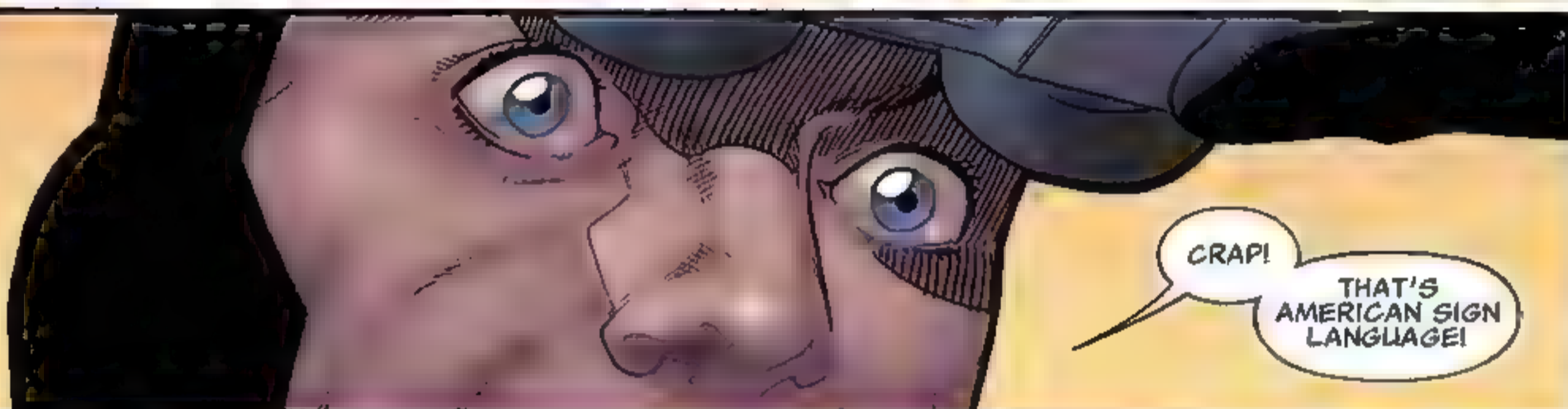
THINK
HE'S A
MUTANT?

MAYBE.
HE'S GESTURING
AWFULLY
EMPHATIC--



CRAP!

THAT'S
AMERICAN SIGN
LANGUAGE!



HE'S DEAF!
HE CAN'T
HEAR BANSHEE'S
VOICE--





I GET IT! I GET IT!

"SO IT'S PLAN B THEN! SHOCK AND AWE!"



"BETA SQUAD, MOTHER HEN HAS LOST CONTROL OF THE CHICKS. MOVE IN BUT USE RESTRAINT."

"AND BE CAREFUL OF THE KIDS. WE DON'T WANT TO HURT ANY OF TH--"

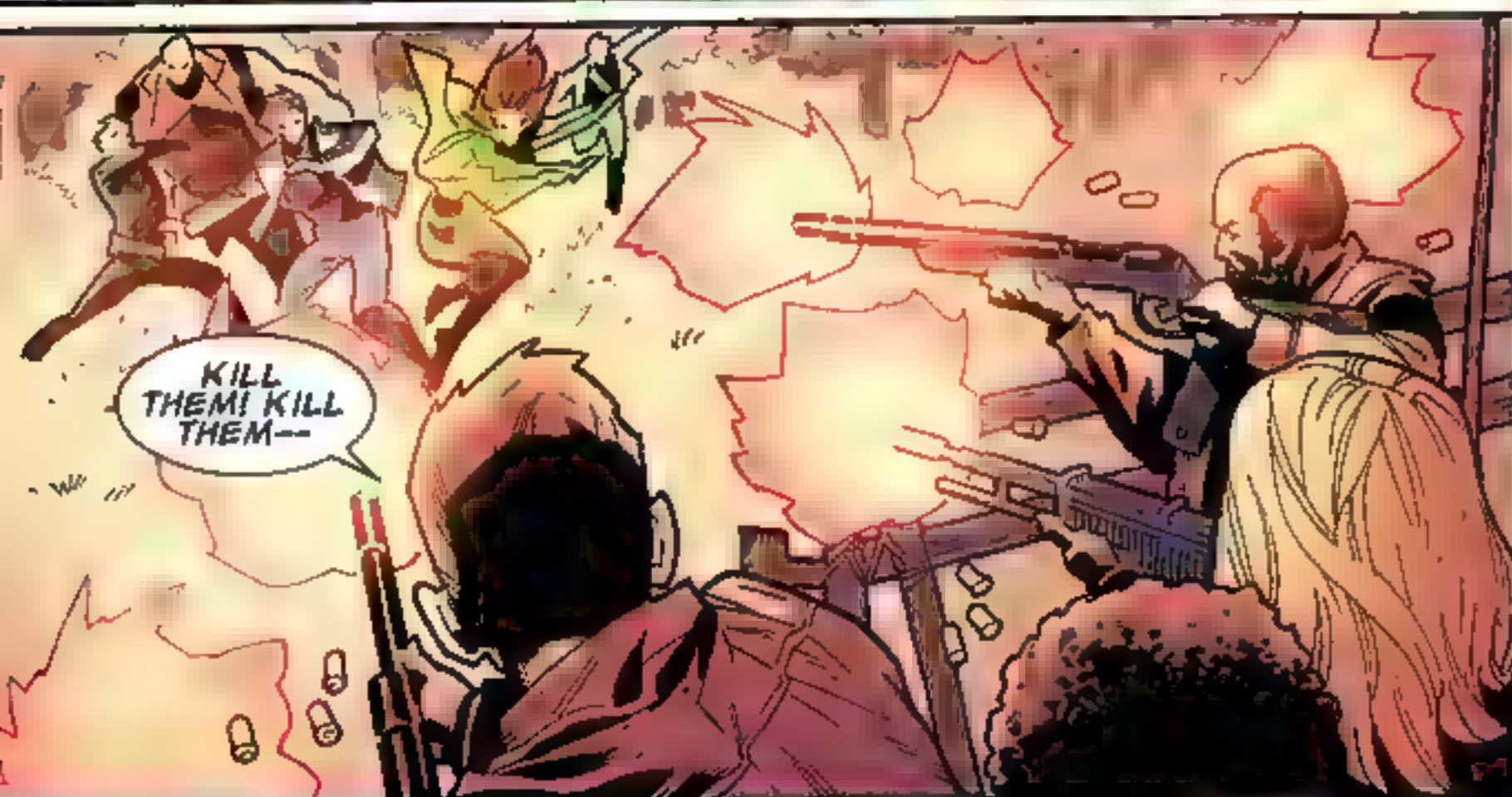


DIE, MUTANTS! DIE!

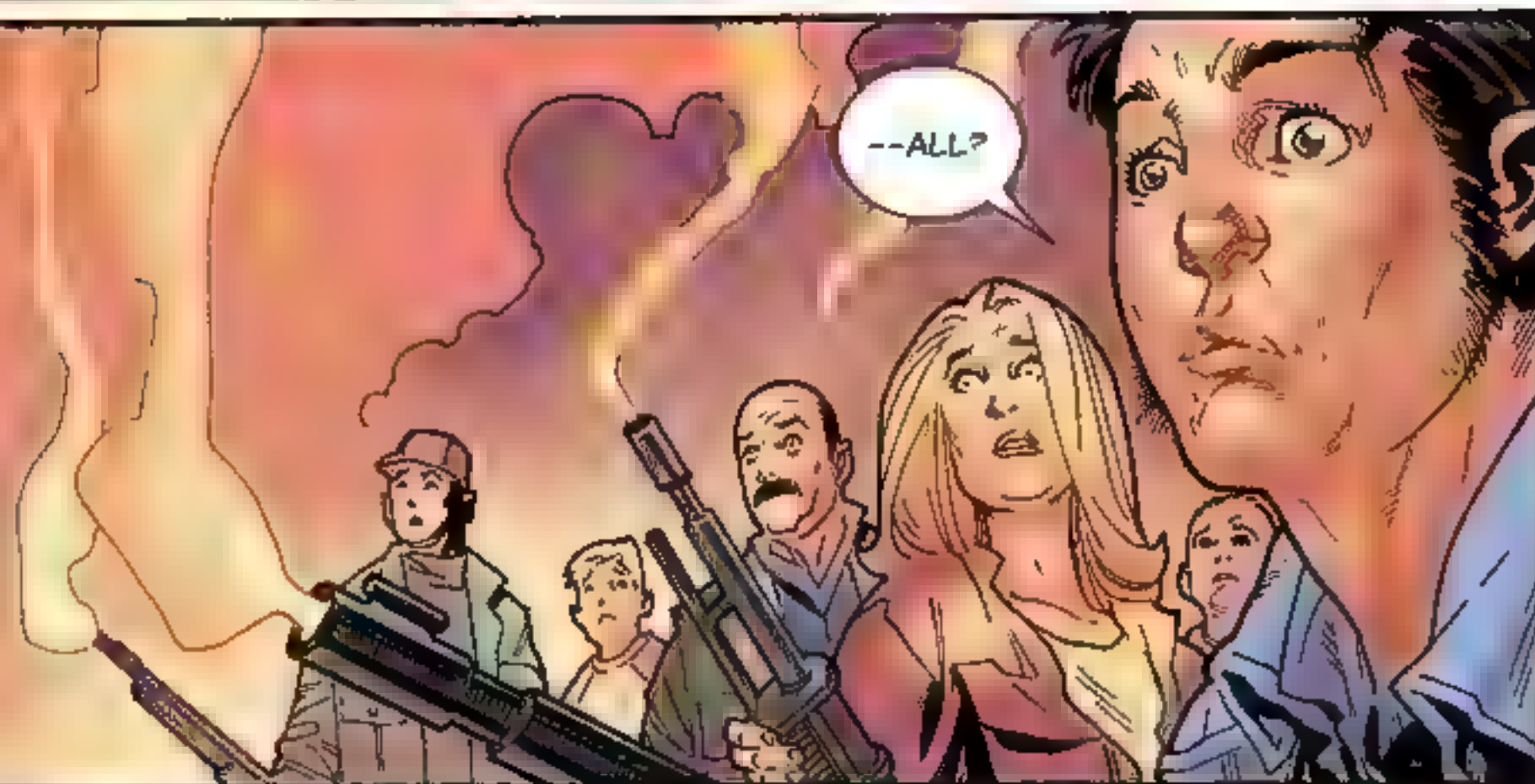


BE CAREFUL
OF THOSE
KIDS?

I BLAME
SOCIETY.



KILL
THEM! KILL
THEM--



--ALL?



YOU
GOT 'EM,
LORNA?

I GOT
'EM.



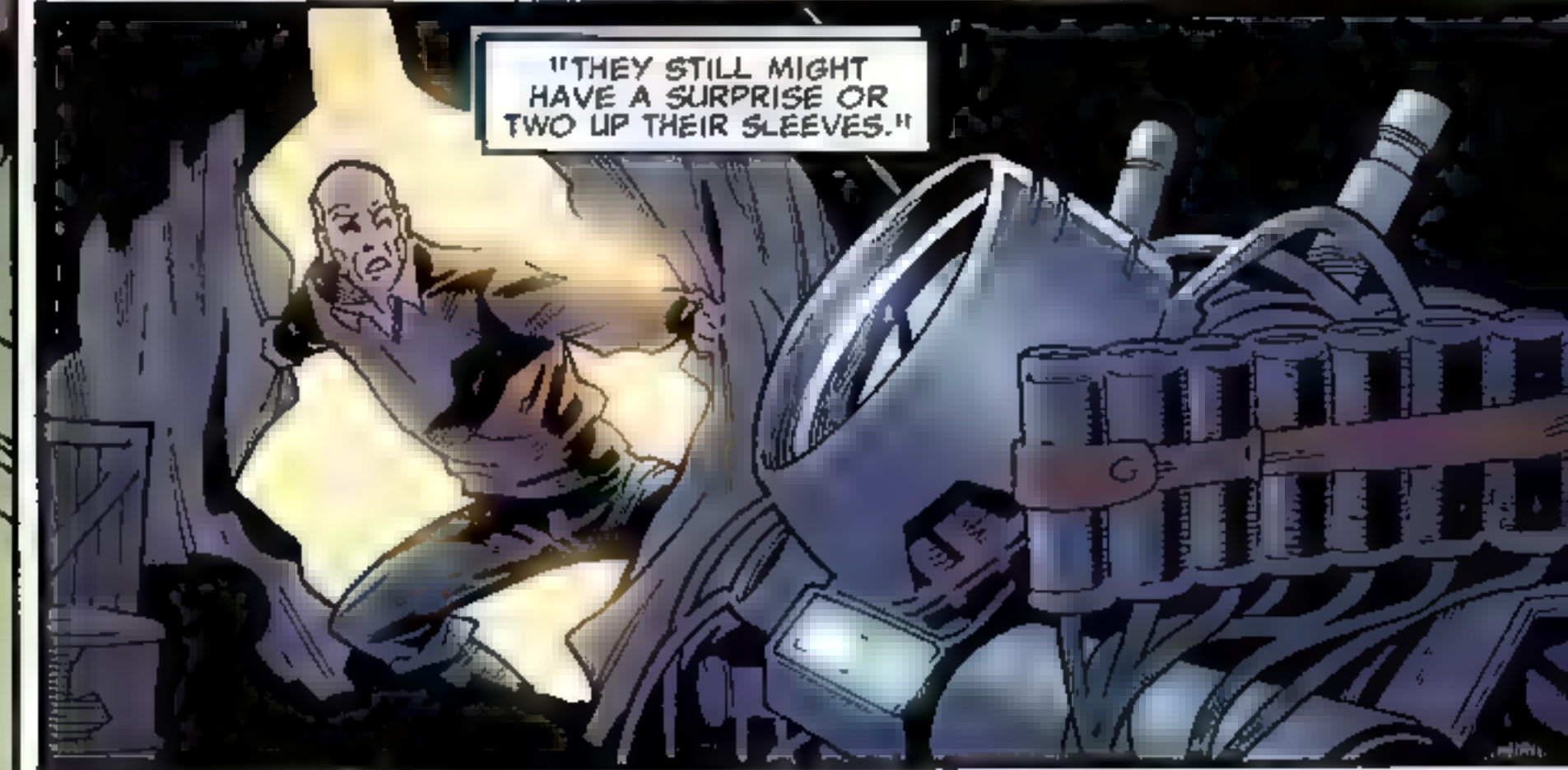
OKAY,
THAT'S
HANDY.



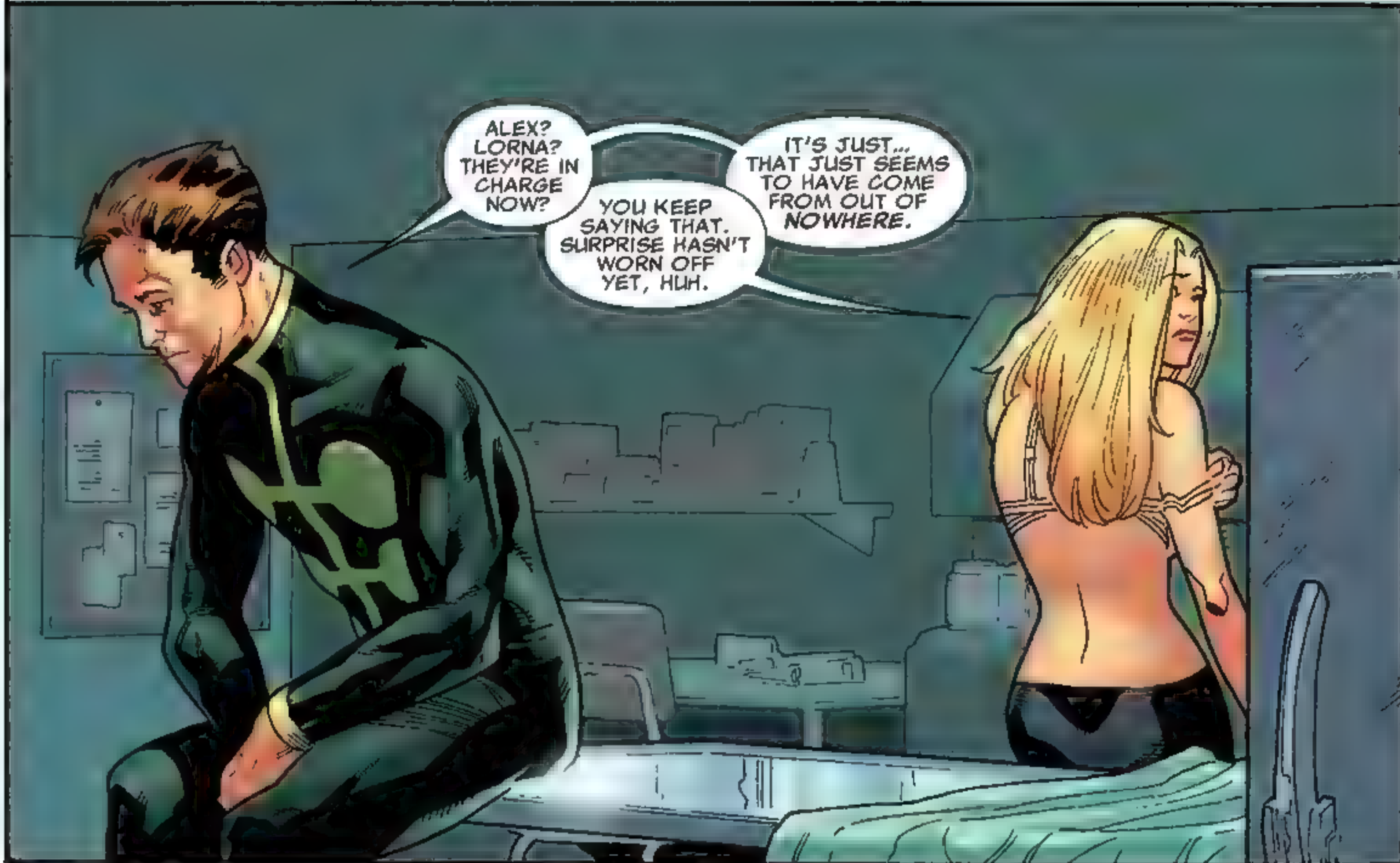
"OKAY, TEAM.
BAG 'EM AND
TAG 'EM."



"BUT BE CAREFUL.
DON'T GET
OVERCONFIDENT."



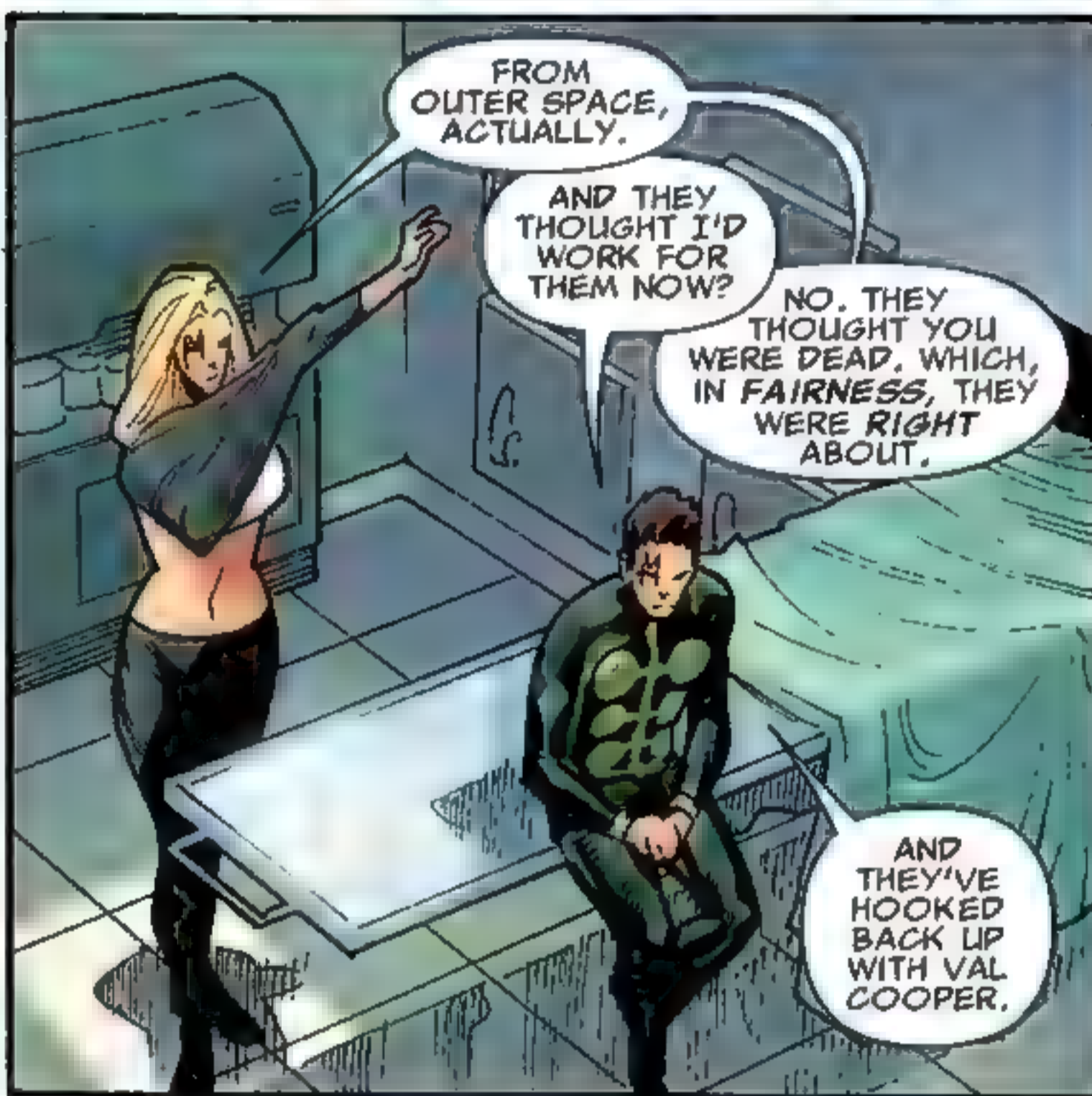
"THEY STILL MIGHT
HAVE A SURPRISE OR
TWO UP THEIR SLEEVES."



ALEX?
LORNA?
THEY'RE IN
CHARGE
NOW?

YOU KEEP
SAYING THAT.
SURPRISE HASN'T
WORN OFF
YET, HUH.

IT'S JUST...
THAT JUST SEEMS
TO HAVE COME
FROM OUT OF
NOWHERE.



FROM
OUTER SPACE,
ACTUALLY.

AND THEY
THOUGHT I'D
WORK FOR
THEM NOW?

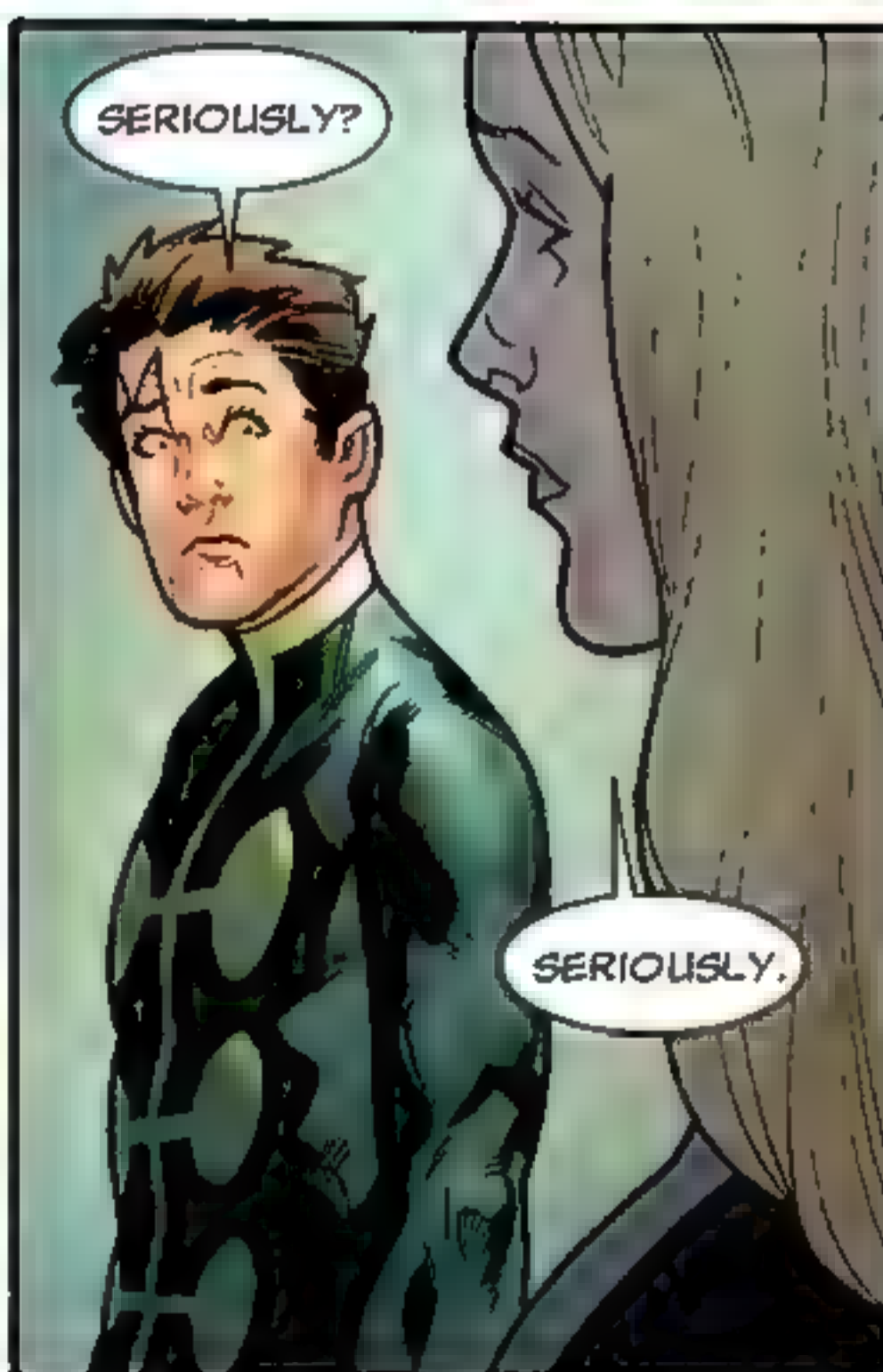
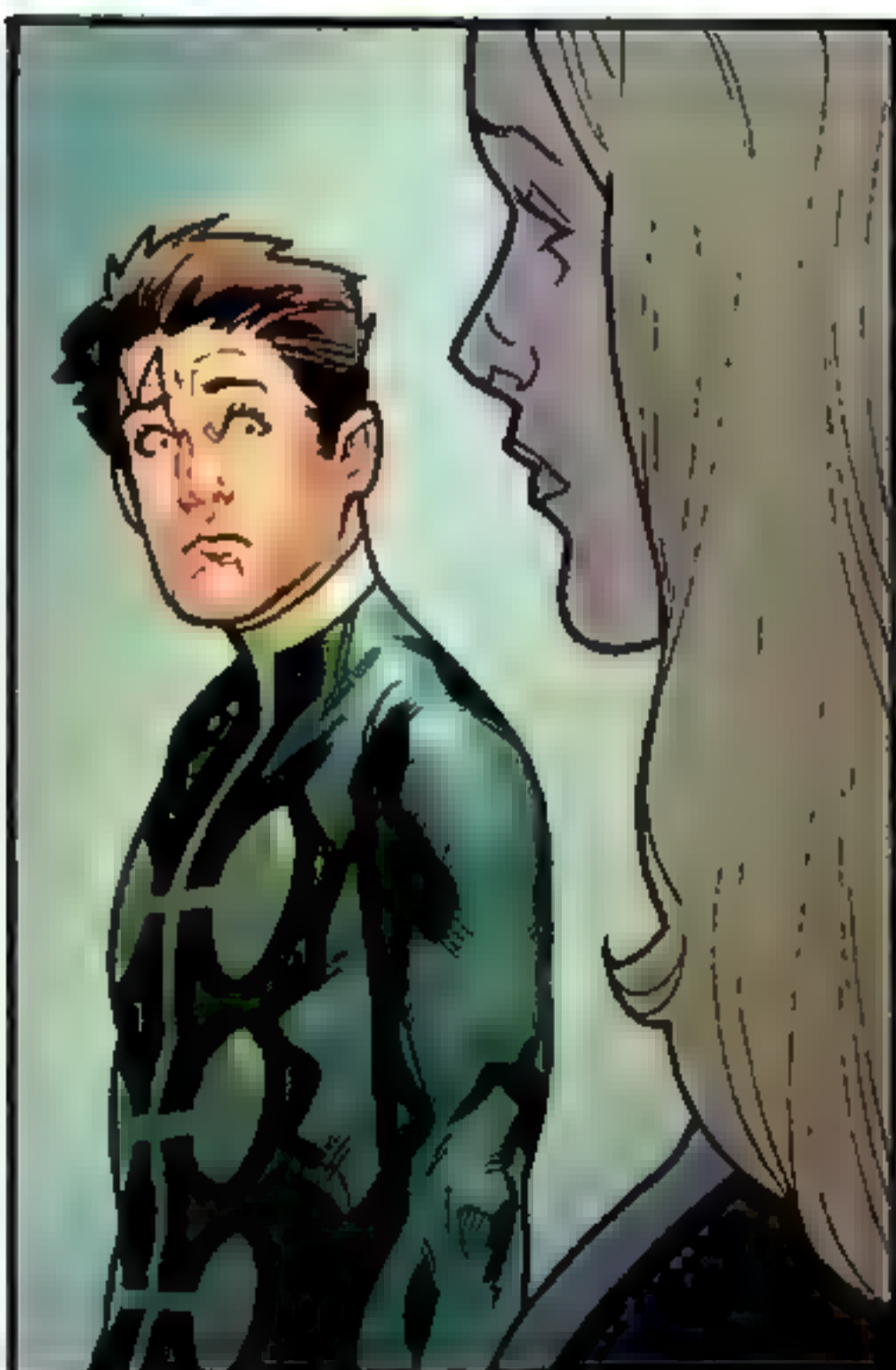
NO. THEY
THOUGHT YOU
WERE DEAD. WHICH,
IN FAIRNESS, THEY
WERE RIGHT
ABOUT.

AND
THEY'VE
HOOKED
BACK UP
WITH VAL
COOPER.



SHE'S...
ONE REGULAR
CLIENT, YES.

OH
YEAH? WHO'S
THE OTHER?
WOLVERINE?



SERIOUSLY?

SERIOUSLY.



YOU KNOW
WHAT? JUST
PUT ME BACK
IN THE DEEP
FREEZE.



THIS IS NO
LIFE FOR YOU,
JOSEF.



HIDING UP
HERE, IN THE COLD,
IN THE FROZEN
WASTELAND...

...SIMPLY
BECAUSE THE
MINDS OF HUMANITY
SCREAM AT YOU
INCESSANTLY.

IT'S NOT
HUMANITY'S
FAULT. IT'S
THE DAMNED
MUTANTS.



AND
WOULDN'T IT BE
EXQUISITE IF THEY
WERE ALL DEAD.

THEN YOU
WOULD KNOW
PEACE.

I
WOULD.

THOSE I
WORK WITH
WANT THEM GONE
AS WELL,
JOSEF.

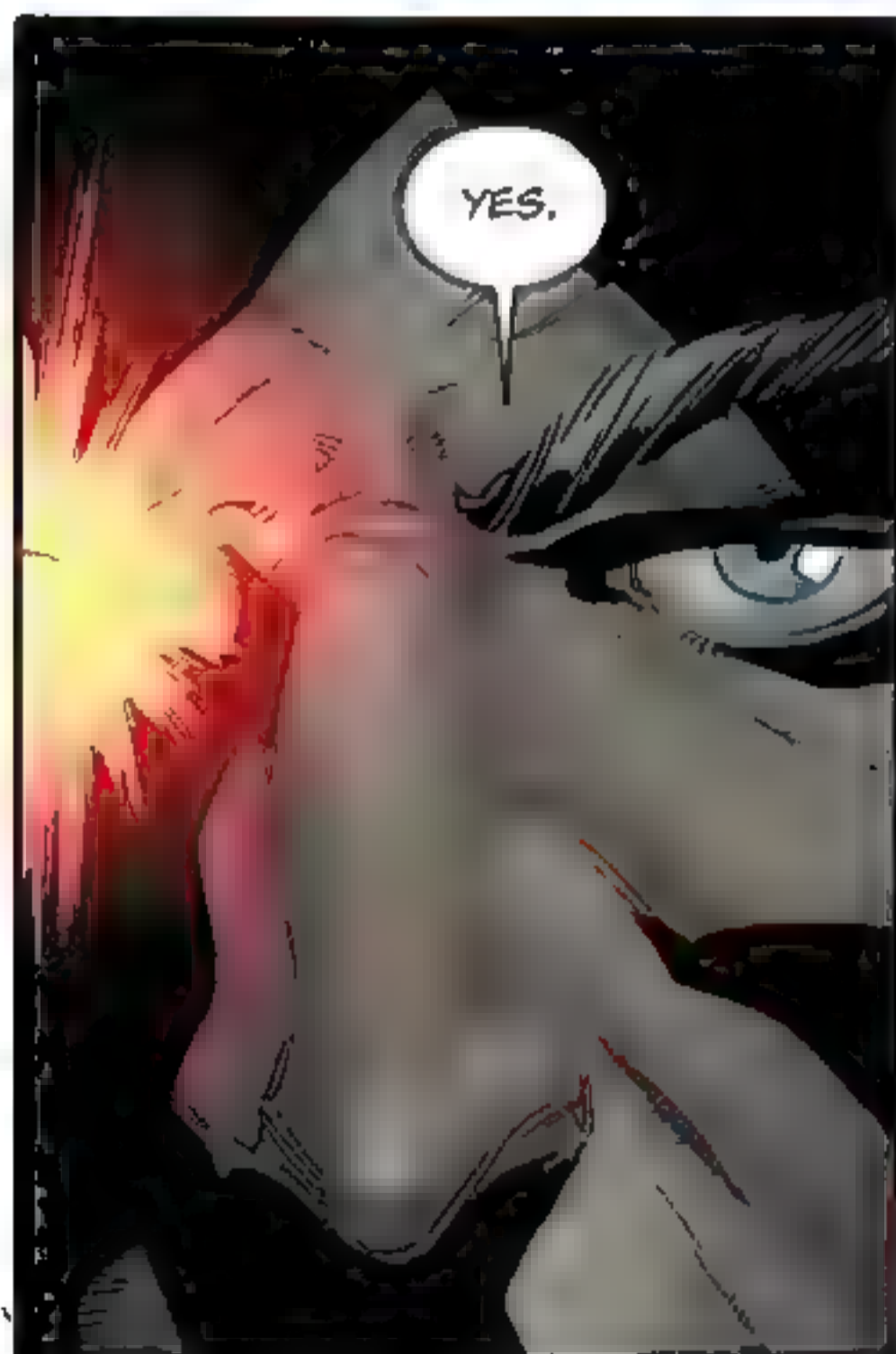


REALLY.
AND WHY
IS THAT?

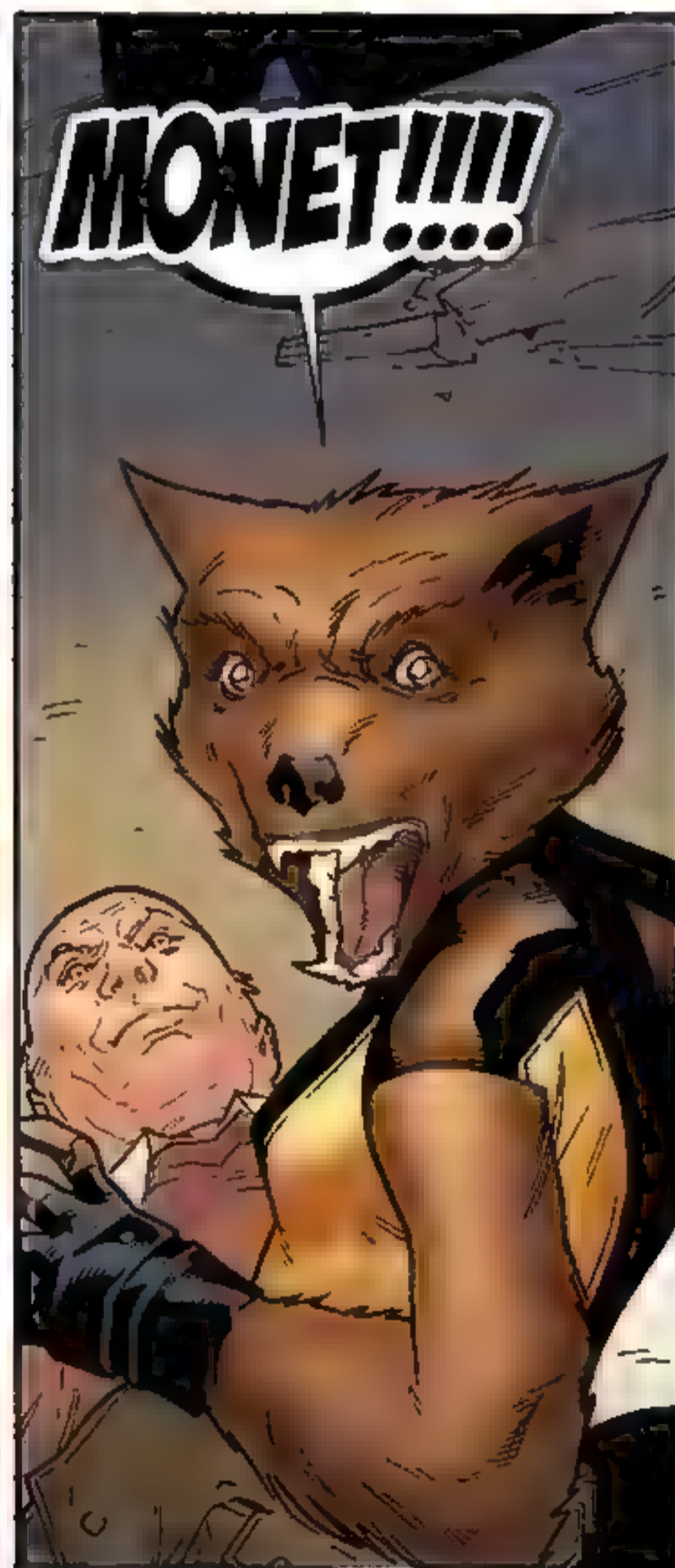
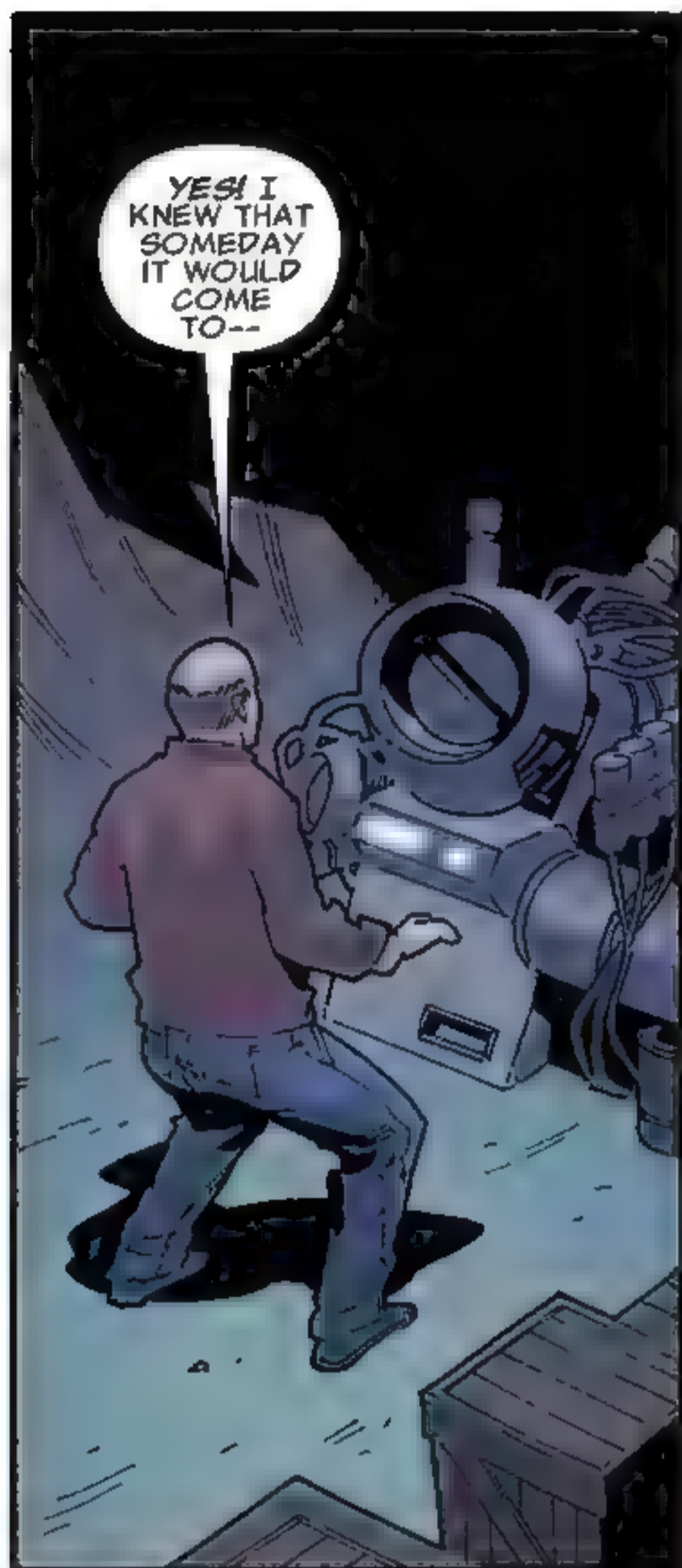


BECAUSE...
WE WANT TO
UNLEASH HELL ON
EARTH. WE WANT TO
BRING ABOUT THE
APOCALYPSE.

IS THAT NOT
A CONSUMMATION
DEVOUTLY TO BE
WISHED?



YES.





I HEARD! GET CLEAR!



HAVOK! SLIGHT WRINKLE!

I'M ON IT! GET IT AS HIGH AS YOU CAN AND THEN GET CLEAR!

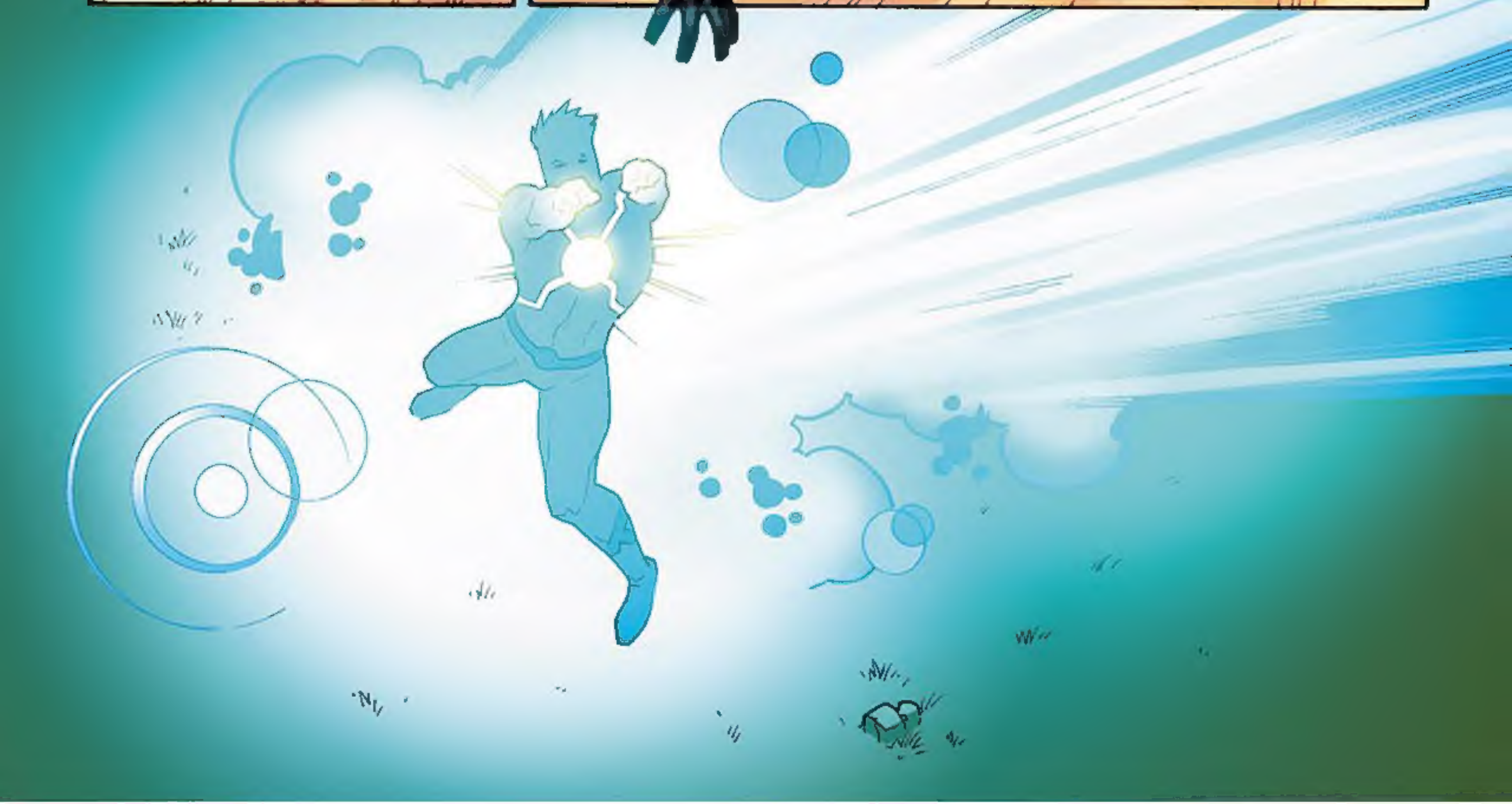


TEN SECONDS! NINE! EIGHT!

I'VE GOT IT TARGETED! THROW IT!



UNNNFFFF!





NICE, INCINERATING IT BEFORE IT COULD EXPLODE.

THERE WAS A CHANCE THAT MY PLASMA BLAST MIGHT HAVE CREATED AN EVEN BIGGER EXPLOSION. STILL, THIS WAS THE SAFEST WAY.

MADROX HIMSELF COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT BETTER.

DON'T DISRESPECT MADROX.

I...I WASN'T. I DIDN'T MEAN--

SORRY, IT'S JUST...

HE MADE IT HIS GROUP. AND NOW HE'S GONE, AND I...

I JUST THINK WE SHOULD HONOR HIM, THAT'S ALL. HONOR HIS MEMORY.

HEY, PIP, I'M BACK FROM THE DEAD.

WHATEVER. DON'T BOTHER ME WHEN I'M ON A PORN SITE.

X-PERT WITNESSES

WRITE TO US AT
OFFICEX@MARVEL.COM
AND MARK
"OK TO PRINT!"

Peter David here, along with the X-Factor office, welcoming you to the best letters page you're reading at this moment. As always, letters may be edited for length, but not meaning.

Dear X-Factor Team--

First of all, thank you for producing such an amazing book every month. I'll get right to the point. The main reason I recently subscribed to X-Factor and the Marvel universe is the resurrection of Shatterstar. To all of his fans that waited years for his return. Can you please shed some light on this character? Questions I know everyone wants to know:

- Shatterstar/Longshot/Dazzler/Spiral: you've heard it before...when will some issues be dedicated to this?

- Shatty's Powers: I get his genetic enhancements. What exactly is his mutant power? Bioelectricity blasts, Teleportation...?

- Shatterstar's relationship: being an old school X-Force fan...Terry always showed interest in the past...where did that go? Besides it would add even more dysfunction to the team.

Shatterstar is a character that hasn't been done any justice. He just doesn't seem like a character that goes in with swords and gets slapped around by the tougher opponents. At least tease us all like M does with her top. Is Shatty going to be a force in Marvel or not?!

Thank you,
Stormin Normin

Nooorrrrrmmmm! The bar hasn't been the same without you, big guy. To answer your questions: (1) Yes, I've heard it before. Let's just say that just a few issues from now, we're going to introduce someone who's a major component in the answers to your question. Hope that'll serve for the time being. Let the speculation begin! (2) Shatterstar, to my knowledge, doesn't remotely fit the Marvel definition of "Mutant." He wasn't born a "normal" individual who suddenly developed powers. He's a genetic construct. The powers that he has are exactly what he was built to have. (3) Considering Shatterstar was sucking face with Rictor within minutes after reuniting, there wasn't really a lot of room to have her exhibiting any interest in him. In terms of your overall comment, I'm not sure I agree. Within a couple of issues of his showing up in this series, Shatterstar was kicking Ben Grimm out a window and has continued to kick butt and take names. So I think he's been more than holding his own.

Dear X-Factor office:

X-Factor #230 had some real laugh out loud moments--the James Brown comment being my highlight. It's wonderful how this book interweaves comedy and deep stuff like the existence of and purpose of the soul.

I'm curious about Longshot's personal take on this. Way back in Mephisto vs X-Men #3 in 1987,

Mephisto says of Longshot, "This helpless being comes from another dimension. He HAS no soul...at least none of any interest to me at this juncture." He continues, "Perhaps this creature's soul resides in his home dimension...or perhaps it is as yet UNFORMED." Maybe Longshot should be cutting Guido some slack??!!

John Roche
Wales, UK.

You're gonna believe the lord of lies, John? 'Cause I sure don't. Just because he says Longshot has no soul, I wouldn't be inclined to believe him. And since, considering the kind of foes X-Factor has been facing, I wouldn't be at all surprised if Mephisto and the Shot-Man have another face off, and the inaccessibility of Longshot's soul might well be an issue. Or, y'know...maybe not.

Dear X-Factor team,

I just finished reading X-Factor #230 and when I saw Havok and Polaris on the last page I actually jumped off my couch and screamed "Yessssssss!" X-Factor has been my favorite comic since it debuted in 1986, when the roster turned over in issue #71, I was really excited to see Havok and the new team.

X-Factor is actually the only comic series that I still collect. I had been tempted to write in the past to see if you would ever bring back Havok and Polaris, so seeing the surprise ending of issue #230 really made my day. I hope they are back for good, but even if it is only for a few issues it was a nice blast from the past and put a smile on my face. Please keep up the great work, I love the sense of humor and drama involved in each and every issue. I look forward to seeing how this storyline plays out.

Thank you,
Danny Bertorelli
Long Island City, NY

They're as close to "back for good" as anyone ever is in a mighty Marvel team book, Danny, if that helps.

Mr. David:

Thank you for making me laugh. Humorous storytelling in today's comics is a rarity. And yet, you pull it off on a monthly basis in X-Factor. Reading the comic, it occurred to me that the main reason that I buy the book every month is not for the non-stop action or intrigue or "I can't believe that just happened" cliff hangers that the comic provides -- and it does provide a lot of the above -- but for the clever humor that you work into every story amid the explosions and fisticuffs. Great job, sir -- keep us in stitches!

Reed Beebe
Kansas City, MO

I'd like to take all the credit, Reed--indeed, it's requiring superhuman restraint not to--but we have a great crew, top to bottom, working to bring you this book thirty-seven times a year. So thanks from everyone for your kind words.

Mr. David,

My love of this book is unending, I hope you have plans to stay with this book for as long as humanly possible, cuz I can't imagine anyone else fronting the writing. In the "more is more" department, do you have any plans for any one-shot books that will round out the characters, or to give them a self-contained adventure?

To the Man Who Knows Stuff...
My thanks,
Bill Morra

I'm not sure we need more one-shots, Bill. We're already producing ninety-three issues of this book a year. Because of that, I feel that there's more than enough room in the fifteen thousand pages of story that we're already turning out to give everyone spotlight issues. Over the next few months we have stories starring: Madrox and Shatterstar; Banshee and Havok; an all-girls road-trip issue spotlighting Polaris and Wolfsbane. It's gonna be a good time.

Hello Mr. David,

Long time listener, first time caller. I just have a quick question. Do you watch the TV show Supernatural? I've noticed some things that made me wonder. Two things that come to mind are Layla and the salt and Guido running around with no soul. Am I just a super-nerd or is there something to this?

Also, I'd just like to thank you for keeping BWA-HA-HA alive in comics. I absolutely love X-Factor and it's easily the longest running title in my subscription box.

Thank you.
Mitch Schmidt

I do indeed watch "Supernatural," Mitch. To some degree we're pulling from the same source material (such as salt being a deterrent) so there's going to be overlap. But as for Guido not having a soul (as happened to Sam Winchester, for anyone out there who isn't watching the show), that was something I was planning for a loooong time. Keep in mind that I showed Layla's reincarnation power (when she revived a butterfly) before "Supernatural" was even on the air, and established the soulless consequence of her using the power....what, three years ago? So usually I'm ahead of the curve. In order to avoid overlap, I did wind up scuttling a storyline involving Leviathans since those are the villains of the current season. Which was a shame, because I'd used a Leviathan in a novel of mine, *Darkness of the Light*, in 2007 and I wanted to revisit it. Ah well.

That's it for this go-around. If you want to ask questions any other time, feel free to follow me on Twitter, @peterdavid_pad. I don't guarantee I'll answer, but ya never know.

PAD

NEXT ISSUE



DAVID / KIRK



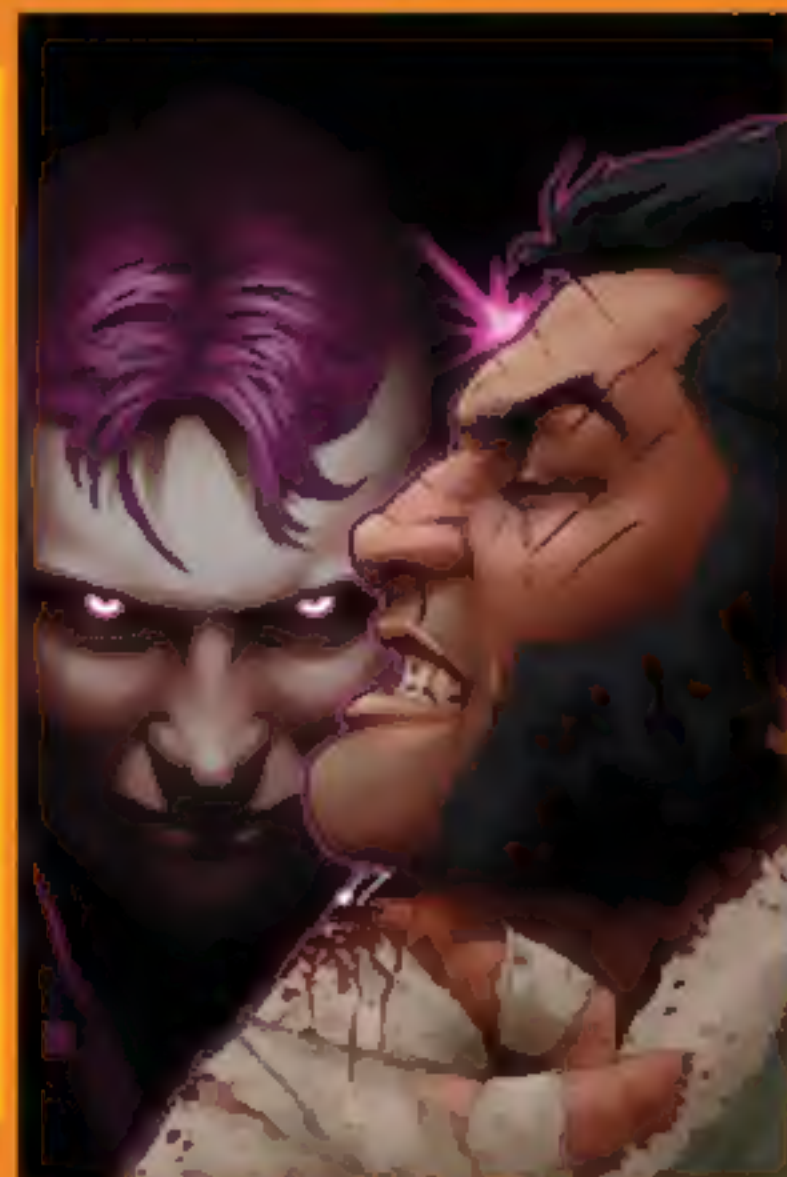
MORE FROM TEAM WOLVERINE...



UNCANNY X-FORCE #23
REMENDER / TOCCHINI
03 / 28 / 12



X-MEN LEGACY #264
GAGE / SANDOVAL
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WOLVERINE AND THE X-MEN:
ALPHA AND OMEGA #4
WOOD / BROOKS & BOSCHI
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